

Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

The Planned Parenthood Society might as well close its Hollywood office. This fall the happily un-married will take over television.

Married life was never a great influence in Southern California so it's no surprise to anyone that most of the characters in the TV shows will soon be bachelors, spinsters, widows and widowers—and there doesn't appear to be an unhappy one in the lot.

There's no marriage bureau that registers the marital status of fictional characters and you'd be surprised how many actors don't know whether their TV character is married or not. Over half of those who are widows or widowers don't know how they got that way, but after extensive research I have compiled the following marriage statistics:

Shows with bachelor heroes: 18. Shows with spinsters leads: 6. Widowers with their own show: 7. Widowers with their own shows: 5. Total un-married: 36... as opposed to 9 shows based on married life.

THE GREATEST advances into un-married bliss will be made by widows this season. Last year there were only two: Barbara Stanwyck's Victoria Barkley in "Big Valley," whose husband Tom was killed by a hired assassin; and Bea Benderelet's Kate in "Petticoat Junction," whose husband was never explained. This month they will be joined by five more.

You let one in and this is what happens:

Diahann Carroll's "Julia" was married to a soldier killed in Vietnam; Gail Fisher, the new girl on "Mannix" is the widow of a policeman; Mrs. Muir of "The Ghost and Mrs. Muir" is a widow with two children without explaining what happened to her husband and the same goes for Doris Day's new TV character and the new Lucille Ball, whose TV children will be her own, but their fictional father will definitely not be Desi Arnaz.

WIDOWERS who will return for another season are "Bonanza's" Pop Cartwright,

who has buried three wives; Eirem Zimbalist's "FBI" man whose wife was killed when she got in the way of a bullet meant for him; Walter Brennan's "Will Sonnet," and Fred MacMurray's "My Three Sons." Widower Andy Griffith will be absent from the screen this year but he will be replaced by Ken Berry's widower character in "Mayberry RFD."

Among the returning bachelors are the title characters of "Judd," "Ironside," "Gomer Pyle," "Mannix," and "It Takes a Thief." Others who are happily un-married are James Arness' Matt in "Gunsmoke," Brian Keith's bewildered bachelor father in "Family Affair" as well as his valet played by Sebastian Cabot. Patrick McNee of "The Avengers" is un-married and so are all the characters in "Mission Impossible" as far as CBS knows.

THEY WILL be joined by six new series based on un-married heroes: "Lancer," all about three single guys on a ranch; "Hawaii Five-O" starring Jack Lord as a bachelor police detective in the islands; "The Outsider," who is a real loner; "The Outcasts" with two bachelor leads—one white, one black; and the three rotating characters of "The Name of the Game" played by Robert Stack, Tony Franciosa and Gene Barry. The ghost of "The Ghost and Mrs. Muir" is presumed to be un-buried by a ghostly wife and the boy who plays the "Ugliest Girl in Town" is free of similar encumbrances—I hope.

RETURNING spinsters are ABC's flying nun, Linda Evans' dumb blonde in "Big Valley," Mario Thomas of "That Girl," Barbara Eden's dreamy "Jeannie" and the best of the lot—Kitty of "Gunsmoke," who's not only desirable, but she's employed.

If we are to judge by the foregoing single-blessedness, the motto of Hollywood's writers today appears to be "Better to have loved and lost than to have to get up for the 2 a.m. feeding."

Postmaster Praised for School Savings Program

Postmaster Carl L. Backlund has been commended by Glen R. Johnson, National Director of the U.S. Savings Bonds Division, for his leadership and service to the Treasury's School Savings Program.

In a letter to Backlund, Johnson said, "We are — once again — counting on your leadership and cooperation for the successful operation of the School Savings Program in local communities. A large measure of the success of this program is due to the fine service you and your personnel provide."

Johnson also pointed out the recent increases in the interest rates of Savings Bonds and Freedom Shares, noting that Freedom Shares are now available for over-the-counter purchase with Series E Bonds of the same or larger denomination.

Many Torrance Schools offer School Savings — part of the nationwide Savings Bonds Program. Savings Stamps in five denominations, from 10 cents to \$5, are on sale at all times in the post office and on Stamp Day in schools. As pupils fill their albums — which are provided free — they exchange them for U.S. Savings Bonds at their bank.

Backlund said, "We are happy and proud to offer this service to the youth of America. I know of no way to teach both thrift and civic responsibility than by encouraging our young folks to buy Savings Bonds and Stamps. In this way, they really share in America."

Robbery Suspect Sought

A man described as a good-looking Mexican-American about 19 years of age is being sought by Torrance police in connection with an armed robbery Monday morning at Charles Rogers Tuxedo Rentals, 2107 Torrance Blvd. He escaped with \$113.

A clerk to duty at 10:30 a.m. reported that the suspect entered the store when no other customers were present and ordered her to open the cash drawer.

"I'm not kidding. Open the drawer and give me the money," he said, simulating a gun under his shirt tail. After taking the cash, the suspect fled on foot down Torrance Boulevard, after turning onto Cravens.

The youth was further described as six feet tall, weighing 175 pounds.

Readings Slated by Kentwood

Open readings for the Kentwood Players' production of "Barefoot in the Park" will be held Monday and Tuesday at 8 p.m.

The readings, to be conducted by director Ed Cotter, will be held at the Westchester Playhouse, 8301 S. Hindry Ave., Westchester.

The Neil Simon comedy, a hit during the 1963-64 Broadway season, has roles for four men and two women.

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